

[Mr. K. C. Mammen Mappillai.]

PRESIDENT: The question is that the Government be granted a sum not exceeding Rs. 1.30 lakhs under Demand XVIII—Chemical Examiner, Ayurveda and Sanitation.

The motion was carried and the grant made.

Demand XIX—Stationery and Printing.

MR. R. KRISHNA PILLAI: Sir, I rise to move for a grant not exceeding Rs. 3.69 lakhs under Demand XIX—Stationery and Printing.

Motion 148.

MR. K. C. MAMMEN MAPPILLAI: Sir, I beg to make the following motion:

148. To reduce the allotment of Rs. 3 lakhs for cost of stationery for public departments by Rs. 1,000.

There is a general and widespread impression that there is a good deal of avoidable waste in the Stationery Department of the Government. One aspect of it which is patent to all of us is the Sirkar Gazette. We find that a lot of superfluous matter is appearing in the Gazette which could very well be avoided by some rearrangement.

In the first place there is a good deal of duplication going on. Government proceedings and other matter are being printed in English and then in Malayalam and also in Tamil. I wish to know whether it is not possible to print the Gazette in three separate parts, and to give to subscribers only the parts which they desire, with an undertaking that if the number of copies—say, in Tamil—diminish below one hundred, the Tamil edition will not be printed. There must be an obligatory edition in English. But, somehow or other, many of us do not stand in need of the same matter both in English and in Malayalam, for, when we read through the English proceedings, we do not read it in Malayalam also. If this duplication could be removed, a good deal of waste would be avoided. Again, we find the articles and memoranda of association of co-operative societies printed in the Gazette. I am told that, according to the law on the subject, it is obligatory that those regulations should be published in every one of the issues of the Gazette up to a certain time, and that it would be a very difficult matter to avoid this. In every issue of the Gazette, a lot of space is taken up with the publication of these rules; but I am assured that not a single soul finds the use of these rules and regulations. And then again, we find the proceedings of Municipal Councils and other such matters of local interest in the Gazette. Local sheets may be added and some abridged matter may be published in the Gazette, if necessary. Departmental sheets should also be regularised, so that waste may be avoided and a lot of space saved in the Gazette. Once a competent person looks carefully into the subject, I am sure that there will be found several directions in which economy may be achieved.

There is another small item in which much saving could be effected. When stationery has to be sent out to different departments in distant taluks, the departmental subordinates now come and take over the required stationery. Instead of this, if a person is sent out with the necessary quantity of stationery to be supplied to the different departments, I am told by a gentleman who understands the details that the saving would be considerable.

There are other directions also. But all that I want is to call attention to the necessity of looking into the subject, so that the general impression that there is a good deal of avoidable waste may be removed and all possible waste avoided.

MR. R. KRISHNA PILLAI: Sir, the question of deleting all superfluous matter in the Gazette is already engaging the attention of the Government. Any suggestion on the point from the members will be very thankfully received.

In regard to the direct supply of stationery, that system is put into operation and is working successfully.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF: Sir, may I suggest that, instead of writing on full sheets, half sheets be used?

PRESIDENT: I may say, by way of explanation, that my belief is that there is considerable scope for economising stationery and that the matter is receiving the attention of Government.

MR. JOHN MACKIE: May I be allowed to make a suggestion? The Financial Secretary in introducing the budget said that Government owed a considerable sum of money to their stationery suppliers. This is, of course, very unfortunate, and I would suggest that Government find means at once of repaying this debt, as at present I take it that Government cannot go to other firms and ask for quotations and must be paying considerably more for their stationery than they would, if they were not tied to this firm.

PRESIDENT: By way of explanation, I may tell you that Government have been tied to that firm, in a sense, for the past four or five years. Now we are calling for quotations from other firms and we do not give orders to that firm, unless its quotations are more favourable than those of other firms.

MR. V. SUBBA AIYAR: Sir, I have to make an observation with reference to the suggestion of Mr. Mammen Mappillai. Almost all the Regulations contain a provision that Government may frame rules; and such rules have to be published in the Gazette. And so far as Regulations are concerned, Bills up to the final stage have to be published in English and Malayalam. Under the Municipal Regulation, abstracts of the proceedings of Municipal Councils have also to be published; and so also of co-operative societies. I do not think that the House will agree to the suggestion of Mr. Mammen Mappillai that the Gazette should appear either in the English or in the Malayalam language. Many read only the English portion of the Gazette. Mr. Kunjitomman will desire that the whole thing should appear in Malayalam. If the House

[Mr. P. K. Narayana Pillai.]

agrees that the bye-laws and proceedings of Municipal Councils and the rules of co-operative societies need be published only in some local paper or in some other manner and that they need not be published in the Gazette, certainly Government will welcome the suggestion and take the necessary steps to amend the law. But Government will not be justified in taking any action in the matter unless they are quite sure that they will receive the support of the non-official majority of this House. If all these municipal proceedings could be deleted from the Gazette, it would certainly be a good thing.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Will Mr. Subba Aiyar be pleased to say what the practice is in other Provinces?

MR. V. SUBBA AIYAR: There are the District Gazettes in which these proceedings are published and the municipalities are paying for it.

PRESIDENT: They do, I know.

MR. V. SUBBA AIYAR: Perhaps, since the Municipal Councils are distinct bodies, it will be well if we make them pay for the publication.

RAO BAHADUR K. A. KRISHNA AIYANGAR: Sir, I myself do not see the use of the abstracts of the proceedings of Municipal Councils published in the Gazette. They are now sent up as a statutory obligation for publication. At the earlier stages when local self-government must have been in its infant condition, the proceedings of a particular municipality might have been of some advantage to the members of another municipality. Probably it had its educative value then. But municipalities have been in existence now for a fairly long period; and each municipality relies upon its own traditions, and upon its own proceedings, and it is not prepared to be led by what is being done in other places. And, with advantage to the public, I think the Municipal Regulation may be amended so as to avoid the necessity of an abstract of the proceedings of municipal councils being published in the Gazette. That takes a good space of the Gazette; there are 19 municipalities; and they require a large space in the Gazette.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: Sir, I have a few words with respect to the suggestion of Mr. Mammen Mappillai—to publish the Gazette in three parts, English, Tamil and Malayalam. That was a suggestion that I brought up in the non-official conference the other day here. At that time some non-officials could not see eye to eye with me. It has one advantage, *i. e.*, it will expedite publication in the Gazette. Official reviews are now published in the Gazette many days after the orders are passed. This aspect of the matter has to be taken into consideration. I would add a word with respect to the publication of the proceedings of municipal councils. The publication is now statutory. In another view of the matter also, the publication is necessary. The resolutions of any particular municipality must be certainly communicated to those who reside within that municipal area. They have to

shape their conduct accordingly. Some sort of publication is, therefore, absolutely necessary. Since there is no other channel for publishing these proceedings, the official Gazette is the only means of publishing them.

There is also another way in which probably some saving may be made with respect to stationery. From my own experience, so far as it goes, I see that in some courts of law, especially in Munsiffs' Courts, and occasionally in District Courts, judicial officers take down depositions in their own hand. But their handwriting is of such a peculiar kind as to make it indispensable for the appellate court to be supplied with legible copies of the same depositions, when a case goes up in appeal. There seems to be a circular to that effect. We have instances in which the High Court have found it impossible to decipher the handwriting of subordinate Judges in depositions and they have sent such depositions back for getting them put into readable shape. The additional copy may be dispensed with, if some proper directions are issued.

PRESIDENT: It means one more clerk to the Munsiff's Court.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: The bench clerk generally does all this work. It is not all judicial officers that need it. Only some of the Judges and Munsiffs in their anxiety to get through the depositions do so, to the cost of additional labour and stationery provided by the Government. I leave it to the consideration of the Government whether it is not after all an avoidable waste.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Sir, I have only one observation to make with reference to the publication of the proceedings of Municipal Councils. I think it is extremely desirable that publication should be given to municipal council proceedings, especially in view of the fact that large powers and privileges are vested in the municipalities, and these have to be necessarily published somewhere. Now they are published with advantage in the Government Gazette. After all, it is not a very heavy expenditure that the Government are incurring on that account. Municipal councils cannot incur that expenditure, especially at this stage of their development. I, therefore, consider it absolutely essential that a portion of the Gazette should be given to the publication of the proceedings of municipal councils.

MR. TARIATU KUNJITOMMAN: സർ, ഗസറ്റ് ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ രീതിയിൽ ഇംഗ്ലീഷ്, മലയാളം, തമിഴ് എന്നീ മൂന്ന് ഭാഷകളിലുംകൂടി പ്രസിദ്ധപ്പെടുത്തുന്ന സംഗ്രഹം നിരത്തി ഓരോ ഭാഷയിൽ മാത്രം വെച്ചേറെ പ്രസിദ്ധപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതുകൊണ്ടു കാര്യത്തിനു ദോഷംകൂടാതെ ചിലവുചുരുക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. ഓരോ വരിക്കാർക്കും മൂന്ന് ഭാഷയിലും അച്ചടിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള ഗസറ്റുകൊണ്ടു പ്രത്യേകോപയോഗമെന്നും ഇല്ല. വെച്ചേറെ ഭാഷകളിൽ തയ്യാറാക്കിയിട്ടുള്ള ഗസറ്റുകൾ അതാതു ഭാഷകളിൽ ഇഷ്ടമുള്ളവർ അയച്ചുകൊടുത്താൽ മതിയാകുന്നതാണ്. ഇപ്പോഴത്തെതിൽനിന്നു ചിലവു മൂന്നിലൊന്നായി കുറയ്ക്കുകയും ചെയ്യാൻ സാധിക്കുമെന്നു ഞാൻ കരുതുന്നു.

[Mr. M. R. Madhava Variar.]

നതിന് ഇതുകൊണ്ടു സാധിക്കും. പൊതുജനങ്ങളെ ബാധിക്കുന്ന കാര്യങ്ങളടങ്ങിയ ചില പ്രസിദ്ധീകരണങ്ങൾ ഇംഗ്ലീഷിൽ മാത്രമായിരിക്കുന്നതുകൊണ്ടു ജനസാമാന്യത്തിനു യഥാകാലം അറിവാൻ സാധിക്കാതെ വരികയും തന്നിമിത്തം പല ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടുകൾക്കും ഇടയാകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. അവ മലയാളത്തിൽക്കൂടി വേണ്ടതാണ്. മേൽപ്രസ്താവിച്ചവിധം ചെയ്യുന്നതുകൊണ്ടു ഉണ്ടാകുന്ന ചാർജിൽ ഒരംശം ചിലവുചെയ്താൽ ഗസറ്റിന്റെ എല്ലാഭാഗങ്ങളും മലയാളത്തിൽക്കൂടി പ്രസിദ്ധപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിന് ഇപ്പോഴത്തെക്കാൾ ചേരുംപോലും കൂടുതൽ ചിലവുകൂടാതെ കഴിയുമെന്നുള്ളതാണ്.

പരസ്പരസഹായസംഘങ്ങളുടേയും നഗരസഭകളുടേയും റിപ്പോർട്ടുകൾ എല്ലാം ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ നിലയ്ക്ക് ഗസറ്റിൽചേർക്കാതെ ആവശ്യമുള്ളവകൾമാത്രം കൂടെ പ്രതികൾത്തയ്യാറാക്കി, അയച്ചുകൊടുത്താൽ മതിയെന്നു വയ്ക്കുന്നതു ചിലവു ചുരുക്കുന്നതിനുള്ള മറ്റൊരു മാർഗ്ഗമാണ്. പരസ്പരസഹായസംഘങ്ങളിലേയും നഗരസഭകളിലേയും അംഗങ്ങൾ ഉൾപ്പെടെയുള്ള ഏതാനും ബുദ്ധികൾക്കു പ്രസ്തുത റിപ്പോർട്ടുകൾ ഗ്രാമഭായങ്ങളോ ചിരിക്കുമങ്കിലും ഗസറ്റുവരികാരിൽ ഭൂരിപക്ഷത്തിനും ഇവ ഉപയോഗകരങ്ങളോ രസപ്രദങ്ങളോ അല്ല. അതിനാൽ ഇവ ഗസറ്റിൽനിന്ന് എടുത്തുകളയുന്നതുകൊണ്ടു ജനസാമാന്യത്തിനു യാതൊരു ദോഷത്തിനും മാർഗ്ഗമില്ല.

MR. C. J. CURIEN: The suggestion made by Mr. Mammen Mappillai and some other speakers for economising stationery is that the Gazette should be divided into three parts, and that those who are versed in Tamil should be supplied with Tamil copies, and those who are versed in Malayalam with Malayalam copies. But I have to bring to your notice that, in the translation of English into Malayalam, there are so many technical words which could not be understood unless reference is made to the English copy. It is especially so in the translation of Bills and Regulations that are being passed by the Legislative Council. I would, therefore, oppose the suggestion that it should be divided into three parts. The translation and the original should be published simultaneously.

In regard to municipal council proceedings, I would say that these should appear in the Gazette, because the general population of the towns is not in a position to know the proceedings of the councils by any other means than through the Gazette. It is also desirable that one council should know what the proceedings of another council are. I would, therefore, oppose the motion that these proceedings should be taken away from the Gazette and that it should be divided into three parts.

PRESIDENT: That is not the motion.

MR. C. J. CURIEN: I mean the suggestion.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI: Sir, I oppose the motion, because the cost is not very much and the prestige of the Government requires that the policy should be continued.

MR. M. R. MADHAVA VARIAR: Sir, I have to make a few observations with regard to the publication of municipal council proceedings in the Gazette. I think that this publication is not at all necessary, as, I presume, it is intended only for the information of those who

inhabit municipal areas. It is not meant for the general public, and I do not think that many people are interested in reading the proceedings of municipal councils. Moreover, the publication is almost always belated. I know that in Quilon itself many meetings take place, but the proceedings are published three or four months afterwards. If information should be given to those who inhabit the municipal area, the proceedings of the council may be published in the municipal office itself. Generally, the electoral roll of the municipality is published in the municipal office. Similarly, the proceedings could be published in the municipal office. So, the publication in the Gazette is a mere waste of money and is useless.

MR. A. GOVINDA MENON: Sir, I do not know of any State where something like four to five lakhs of rupees are spent on stationery. The non-publication of these municipal matters, which would cost only one or two hundred rupees a year, will have no material effect on the stationery budget. That is only a small matter. There is no use in economising that way.

If you take into account the cost on account of stationery spent on each office in the whole State for the last three or four years, if you take the average cost of the expenditure on stationery consumed by every office and then allow the sum as contingency to that office—

PRESIDENT: Contract contingency—is that what you mean?

MR. A. GOVINDA MENON: Sir, the State can supply the stationery, but the departments should not be supplied with more than the stationery that is needed for them. Each office, then, will be more careful in seeing that only so much stationery as can be bought for the sum allotted for the particular year is consumed by that office. That is the only way of effecting an efficient check on the wastage of stationery.

MR. K. C. MAMMEN MAPPILLAI: Sir, Mr. A. Govinda Menon may be speaking from the standpoint of the President of a municipality. There is another side to the question and that is the standpoint of the tax-payer. If the sense of the country is taken, I think the preponderance of opinion will be for the exclusion of municipal proceedings from the Gazette. I do not think the cost will be so low as Rs. 100, as some expenditure for the printing of the proceedings of these Councils in the Gazette has also to be allowed. Instead of Rs. 100, it will be several times hundred.

With these words, I withdraw my motion.

The motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

[Mr. R. Krishna Pillai.]

Motion 149.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Sir I beg to make the following motion:

149. To reduce the allotment of Rs. 3 lakhs for cost of stationery for Public Departments by Rs. 100.

I make this motion with a view to bring to the notice of the Council a point raised by me in the matter of the stationery contractor's dues. We find that Messrs. Dickinson & Co. have not been paid their dues for the last so many years. The stationery contractor's case was discussed by me at the general discussion of the budget. It was fully explained then and I do not wish to traverse the ground once again. But the Financial Secretary was not then able to give me a satisfactory reply. He disposed of the matter in one sentence at the close of his speech. He said that the matter was being looked into. It is with a view to elicit an answer from him as to where we stand and whether there is any chance of improvement in the near future or not that I have put forward this motion.

MR. R. KRISHNA PILLAI: Sir, I have been looking into the accounts of the stationery contractors this morning. I find that the amounts due to them up to the end of 1097 will not exceed Rs. 3 lakhs and odd. The articles of stationery supplied during 1097 have not been paid for. We are making independent enquiries as to the rates quoted by them. We hope to verify the rates and pay off the arrears as early as possible. The sum of Rs. 3 lakhs provided in the budget is intended for clearing off the liabilities up to the close of 1097. For the year 1098, no stationery has till now been ordered.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI: I wish to know if it is not more economical to manufacture our own paper in Travancore.

PRESIDENT: You cannot expect the Government to do that.

MR. R. KRISHNA PILLAI: It is not within the range of practical politics. For the next year, *i e.*, 1098, we do not propose to purchase stationery for more than Rs. 1½ lakhs. The stock we have in hand will last for a few months in 1098.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Will the Chief Secretary tell us when that stock was purchased?

MR. R. KRISHNA PILLAI: It cannot be said to be the purchase of any particular year. It is the balance of the stock for 1097 and the previous years.

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI: Was there any verification of the stock during the last five years?

MR. R. KRISHNA PILLAI: Government have ordered that the stock should be verified, and an officer has also been nominated for the purpose.

MR. K. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Has it been ascertained for how many months the stock would probably last during the next year?

MR. R. KRISHNA PILLAI: It may last for three or four months.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Is the Chief Secretary in a position to give us any statement as to what amount has been spent on the purchase of stationery during 1096 and 1095?

MR. R. KRISHNA PILLAI: I believe the member refers to the value of articles supplied during the years 1095 and 1096. The current agreement was executed early in 1095 and it came into force at the beginning of 1096. A tentative schedule of rates is appended to the agreement. The arrangement is that, if the rates prevailing in the United Kingdom are higher, we should pay at the higher rates, and, if lower, at the lower rates. When the agreement was executed, the rates were fluctuating within very wide limits. The value of the stationery supplied by the contractors in 1095 was Rs. 3,69,540. In 1096, the value came to Rs. 6 lakhs according to their quotations.

MR. K. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: What is the actual payment made?

MR. R. KRISHNA PILLAI: We are having a running account.

PRESIDENT: I may tell you what it is. The system was not working satisfactorily. As the Chief Secretary explained, the agreement of 1095 only mentioned tentative rates. It did not say that the rates should be settled in advance, i. e., before the orders were placed. But the Government referred the agreement to their Law Officers and they have since found that the rates could be settled before orders are placed. But the past orders were made on the strength of the statement that rates could not be settled previously. The firm supplied the stuff; and some time after that they sent their bill. We are verifying the rates with those prevailing in the United Kingdom at a particular time. That is what is delaying the final settlement of these bills. Meanwhile, we are keeping a running account for years. But we are not paying any interest. That is the position which has already been explained by the Financial Secretary. For the last 18 months, every endeavour has been made to effect economy in the use of stationery and also in ordering further stationery.

MR. K. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Will the three lakhs of rupees provided for paying off the arrears be enough?

PRESIDENT: That is our estimate.

MR. K. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Is that matter likely to come up before the Council before the contract is made?

PRESIDENT: We settle the rates before the order is placed with the firm. We do not make any contract. Why should it come up before the Council? We have now provided Rs. 3 lakhs. It is for

[Mr. G. Parameswaran Pillai.]

clearing off the arrears. If within this amount we are not able to meet all the expenditure, we shall have to provide for the balance in 1098 and 1099.

MR. R. KRISHNA PILLAI: We are going to supplement the grant in 1098 to clear off the arrears in 1097.

MR. N. RAMAKRISHNA PILLAI: May I know what the approximate cost of stationery for a year will be, as, in the present state of the accounts, it is not possible to know what exactly is the normal requirement for a single year?

PRESIDENT: I think our normal expenditure should not exceed Rs. 2 to Rs. 2½ lakhs. Mysore is spending only so much. My aim is to reduce the expenditure below Rs. 2 lakhs. It is impossible to say without elaborate enquiry by how much we could reduce our expenditure.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI: I wish to know whether it would be feasible to have the most important offices located near the Huzur Cutcherry, so that, without much writing, business may be transacted without any considerable waste of stationery. Now, that is done in British India by means of unofficial correspondence.

PRESIDENT: If you want all the heads of departments round the Public Offices, I think the rent to be paid would be more than the saving you are going to effect in stationery.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Sir, I withdraw my motion.

The motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

The Council then adjourned at 5-17 P. M., to meet again at 11-30 A. M. on the 4th August, 1922.

S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR,

Secretary to the Legislative Council.